

Farm Labor



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Washington, D.C.

Released April 10, 1992, by the Agricultural Statistics Board. Estimates refer to the week of March 8-14, 1992.

Number of Hired Workers Up

There were 286,000 hired workers on farms and ranches in the four surveyed States during the week of March 8-14, 1992. This compares with 254,000 workers during the February 1992, survey week. No comparable survey was conducted in March 1991. There were 35,000 agricultural service employees working on farms and ranches in California and Florida compared to 36,000 in February.

Average March wage rates received by hired workers in the four surveyed States ranged from \$5.13 per hour in Texas to \$6.80 per hour in California. Wages were higher when compared with February except in New Mexico. In March, agricultural service workers were paid an average of \$6.00 and \$7.20 per hour in California and Florida, respectively.

During the survey week of March 8-14, 1992, field activities were slowed by intermittent rains in portions of California. California's Navel orange harvest continued and was nearly half finished. Valencia orange harvest began in the Desert region. Lemon harvest was active along California's south coast. Artichoke harvest was finished and asparagus harvest was nearly complete in the Imperial Valley. Asparagus harvest remained active in the San Joaquin Valley. California's harvests of broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, celery, and lettuce continued, while summer vegetable planting gained momentum. In Texas, cotton, corn, and grain sorghum planting was active with drying weather conditions in southern and central areas. In the Rio Grande Valley, melon planting continued as field conditions allowed. Land preparation for spring planting was active in the High Plains but was limited by wet field conditions in East Texas. Cantaloupe planting was underway in the Trans Pecos area. In Florida, field preparations for spring planted crops was active. Sugarcane harvest was winding down. Florida's Valencia orange harvest was increasing while grapefruit harvest was active but slowing. Vegetable planting was active in northern Florida and was nearing completion in southern areas. Harvest of winter and early spring vegetables continued.

For information, call Tom Kurtz at (202) 690-3228. Office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. ET.

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All Hired Workers: Number and Wage Rates,
Selected States, March 8-14, 1992 1/

State	Number of Workers	Wage Rates <u>2/</u>
	Thousands	Dollars per Hour
FL	72	6.22
TX	54	5.13
NM	10	5.43
CA	150	6.80

Agricultural Service Workers: Number and Wage Rates,
California and Florida, March 8-14, 1992

State	Number of Workers Working on Farms	Wage Rates <u>2/</u>
	Thousands	Dollars per Hour
FL	8	7.20
CA	27	6.00

All Hired Workers: Number and Wage Rates,
Selected States, February 9-15, 1992 1/

State	Number of Workers	Wage Rates <u>2/</u>
	Thousands	Dollars per Hour
FL	68	6.08
TX	50	5.11
NM	9	6.05
CA	127	6.77

Agricultural Service Workers: Number and Wage Rates,
California and Florida, February 9-15, 1992

State	Number of Workers Working on Farms	Wage Rates <u>2/</u>
	Thousands	Dollars per Hour
FL	8	7.27
CA	28	6.55

1/ Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

2/ Benefits such as housing and meals are provided some workers but the values are not included in the wage rates.

Reliability of Farm Labor Estimates

Survey Procedures: These data were collected by the National Agricultural Statistics Service during the last two weeks of March using sampling procedures to ensure every employer of agricultural workers had a chance of being selected.

Two samples of farm operators are selected. First, NASS maintains a list of farms that hire farm workers. Farms on this list are classified by size and type. Those expected to employ large numbers of workers are selected with greater frequency than those hiring few or no workers. A second sample consists of segments of land scientifically selected from aerial photography. Each June, highly trained interviewers locate each selected land segment and identify every farm operating land within the sample segment's boundaries. The names of farms found in these area segments are matched against the list of farms; those not found on the list are included in the labor survey sample to represent all farms not on the NASS list. This methodology is known as multiple frame sampling, with an area sample used to measure the incompleteness of the list. Additionally, a list of agricultural service firms was sampled in California and Florida. The survey reference week was March 8-14, 1992.

Reliability: Two types of errors, sampling and nonsampling, are possible in an estimate based on a sample survey. Both types affect the "precision" of the estimates.

Sampling error occurs because a complete census is not taken. The sampling error measures the variation in estimates from the average of all possible samples. An estimate of 100 with a sampling error of 1 would mean that chances are 19 out of 20 that the estimates from all possible samples averaged together would be between 98 and 102; which is the survey estimate, plus or minus two times the sampling error. The sampling error expressed as a percent of the estimate is called the relative sampling error. The relative sampling error for the number of hired workers generally ranged between 15 and 25 percent at the published State level. Relative sampling errors for the all hired farm worker wage rate generally ranged between 2 and 3 percent.

Nonsampling errors can occur in complete censuses as well as in sample surveys. They are caused by the inability to obtain correct information from each operation sampled, differences in interpreting questions or definitions, and mistakes in coding or processing the data. Special efforts are taken at each step of the survey to minimize nonsampling errors.

Revision Policy: Farm labor information is subject to revision the next time the information is published or the year after the original publication date. The basis for revision must be supported by additional data that directly affect the level of the estimate. Worker numbers and wage rates for February 1992 were subject to revision with this report. No revisions were made but previous data are reprinted in this report for your information.

The next "Farm Labor" report will be released at 3:00 p.m. ET on May 19, 1992.

The May 19th report will have information for the survey week of April 12-18, 1992. The report will include the number of Total Workers, All Hired Workers, Average Hours Worked by Hired Workers, and the All Hired Worker Wage Rates for 16 States along with regional and U.S. level information. State level information will be available for Arizona, California, Florida, Hawaii, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin. The hourly method of pay wage rate and the wage rate for field and livestock workers will be available for the 16 States and at the regional and U.S. level. The number of self-employed and unpaid workers along with the corresponding average hours worked will be available for California, Florida, Hawaii, and at the regional and U.S. level. Wage rates by method of pay, type of worker, type of farm, and economic class of farm will also be available at the regional and U.S. level. The number of Agricultural Service Workers and the corresponding wage rates (including by method of pay and for field workers) will be published for Florida and California.

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